



**November 20  
through  
December 19, 2003**  
**Opening reception  
Friday, November 21  
6–8.30pm**

**CLOSED NOVEMBER 21, 2003**



SUPERSTUDIO:  
PARK DEDICATED TO  
THE RESISTANCE, 1970.  
PHOTOMONTAGE.



SUPERSTUDIO: REFLECTED ARCHITECTURE SAN FRANCISCO, A CUBE  
OF FOREST ON THE GOLDEN GATE, 1972, PHOTOMONTAGE.

# ARTISTS

## Superstudio: Life Without Objects

Superstudio: Life Without Objects is a retrospective exhibition organized in collaboration with Pratt Manhattan Gallery and Storefront for Art and Architecture. The exhibition examines the work of the Italian avant-garde design group Superstudio, which was founded in Florence in 1966 by Adolfo Natalini, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Roberto Magris, Piero Frassinelli, and Alessandro Magris. Through their designs, Superstudio produced provocative and subversive visions of the future, which were critical to the transformation of architecture and design from the late 1960s through the 1970s. Their output included films, collages, installations, and drawings, as well as buildings and furniture. Superstudio's work was characterized by skepticism toward the modernist ideal that enlightened architecture could change the world for the better. Instead, Superstudio playfully envisaged a future in which people would live in neutral spaces devoid of the unnecessary objects that capitalism was foisting upon them. ♦ William Menking / Peter Lang, Co-Curators

### EXHIBITION CONTINUES AT

♦ Pratt Manhattan Gallery / 144 West 14th Street, 2nd Floor  
Opening: Thursday, November 20, 6.30–8.30pm

♦ Storefront for Art and Architecture / 97 Kenmare Street  
Opening: Friday, November 21, 6–8.30pm

See Events listings for symposium information.

Exhibition initiated by Design Museum, London and sponsored by Pratt Institute, School of Architecture.

## Albrecht Schäfer

### Malevich Museum Bieberach

Malevich Museum Bieberach originates from a fictionalization of historic events that led to one of the largest collections of works by Russian artist Kasimir Malevich in Western Europe. Using Malevich's architectural sculptures as a formal inspiration, Malevich Museum Bieberach proposes a fictional building to house the works that were first shown in 1927 in Berlin and are now in the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Consisting of large-scale pencil drawings, photographic wallpaper, and a Styrofoam sculpture, the project not only exposes a tragic footnote in the history of modernism but also touches on issues of art as a cultural commodity and museum architecture as a contested site of power and spectacle. This is Albrecht Schäfer's first solo exhibition in the U.S. • Christian Rattemeyer, Curator


PROJECT SPACE

## Katsuhiro Saiki

Katsuhiro Saiki uses photography to engage questions raised by the sculptural practices of minimalism. Saiki's representations of landscapes and skies are visually structured by principles of seriality and sequence and address questions of place and placelessness. He often combines his photographs with sculptural presentation, stressing his concern for the physical relation of the viewer to both the representational space of the image and the sculptural space of the object. This is Katsuhiro Saiki's first solo exhibition in the U.S. • Christian Rattemeyer, Curator



ALBRECHT SCHÄFER:  
MALEVICH MUSEUM  
DIEBACH/EXTERIOR,  
2001, PHOTOGRAPHIC  
WALLPAPER.



KATSUHIRO SAITO: TACT 03, 2002,  
C-PRINT ON PEOSTA

SPACE

## INFORMATION / EVENTS

Artists Space is pleased to celebrate the appointment of Christian Rattemeyer as the new curator at Artists Space with the opening of his first two Project Space exhibitions. Lauri Firstenberg continues as Adjunct Curator, working from Los Angeles

\* Sat, Nov 8 / 3-9pm Night of 1,000 Drawings: A unique opportunity to collect works on paper by emerging and established artists. Works are priced by size: \$30 and \$50, and all proceeds benefit Artists Space programs. Cash, checks, and AMEX only \$5 admission, open bar sponsored by Bombay Sapphire and Stone Brewery after 6pm. Artists who have donated work get in free between 3-6pm. Visit [www.artistsspace.org](http://www.artistsspace.org) for submission procedures and other information about the event.

\* Sat, Nov 22 / 2-5pm Symposium: Superstudio: Life Without Objects at Pratt Manhattan, 144 W 14th St, Rm 212. Free and open to the public. Speakers: Paolo Antonelli—MoMA / Kenneth Frampton—Columbia University / Tom Hanrahan—Pratt Institute / Peter Lang—Texas A&M University / William Menking—Pratt Institute / Luca Molinari—Skira Publications / Piero Frassinelli—Adolfo Natalini—Cristiano Toraldo di Francia—Superstudio.

\* Calling all artists! Continuing our program of Survival Skills Workshops we are pleased to offer the following FREE talks (but you have to sign up in advance as places are limited: 212-226-3970 x21).

\* Mon, Dec 1 / 6.30-8pm The Artist-Dealer Connection. Keys to developing a healthy relationship. Speakers: Renee Riccardo, Director, ARENA and Austin Thomas, Artist

\* Thurs, Dec 11 / 6.30-8pm Art in Transit: Insurance, precautions and loan procedures every artist should know. Speakers: Annabelle Larner, Registrar, Independent Curators International and Jonathan Schwartz, Director, Atelier 4

## THANKS

\* Artists Space's programs are made possible, in part, by generous contributions from Altria, Inc. \* American Center Foundation \* Harriet Ames Charitable Trust \* Lily Auchincloss Foundation \* Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation \* Henry Buhl Foundation \* Étant donnés \* Florence V. Burden Foundation \* Carnegie Corporation Inc. \* Cowles Charitable Trust \* The Danielson Foundation \* Barbara and Richard Debs \* Easton Foundation \* I. J. Feldman Foundation \* Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts \* Stephen A. and Diana L. Goldberg Foundation \* Herman Goldman Foundation \* The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation \* Jerome Foundation \* Jane Lombard \* JPMorgan Chase \* The MAT Charitable Foundation \* New York Arts Recovery Fund \* New York Community Trust \* Peter Norton Family Foundation \* Betty Parsons Foundation \* Puffin Foundation Ltd. \* Larry Rivers Foundation \* Romenesa Foundation \* Sandpiper Fund \* Schwartz Foundation \* Starry Night Fund \* Strypemonde Foundation \* The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts \* with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency \* and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

State of the Arts



NYSCA



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BREWING CO.  
NORTH COUNTY SAN DIEGO

COVER: SUPERSTUDIO: A CATALOGUE OF VILLAS, CUBIC VILLA, 1967-68,  
PHOTOMONTAGE.







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**Superstudio - Life without objects**

**Curated by Peter Lang and William Menking**

A motivating force of avant-garde architecture and design during the late 1960s and 1970s, the work of radical Italian design group Superstudio is equally influential today. Founded in Florence in 1966, Superstudio created alternative visions of the future in photomontages, sketches, collages and films that challenged the modernist orthodoxy that architecture and technological advances could change the world for the better. The five members of Superstudio also questioned politics as an effective means of solving social, cultural and environmental problems. This exhibition, drawn from Superstudio's archive and curated in collaboration with members of the group, will revisit their work and trace its influence on subsequent generations of architects from the Memphis collective in mid-1980s Italy, to Rem Koolhaas and Foreign Office Architects.

The exhibition is supported by the Italian Cultural Institute and will open in New York City on November 21st. Work will be shown at Storefront for Art and Architecture, Artists's Space, and Pratt Institute.

**In 2004:**

**Architecture of the Cuban Revolution: 1959-1969**

**Curated by Eduardo Luis Rodriguez**

Over the course of the past 40 years Cuba's political, ideological and cultural climate has produced a narrative of the built environment unique within the history of modern architecture. 'Architecture of the Cuban Revolution, 1959-1969' will focus on those years immediately following the revolution of January 1959. Buoyed by a contagious sense of political optimism and the promise of social reform, Cuba launched a remarkably broad and ambitious national building program. Manifesting the new government's socialist agenda, this building initiative operated through the 60's, producing a wealth of intensely creative and experimental architecture.

The Storefront exhibition will significantly contribute to a growing academic and popular interest in Cuba's artistic production of the 1960's by positioning the work of Cuban architects in a larger, international context. Storefront's exhibition will also provide timely exposure and support for the ground-breaking work of Eduardo Luis Rodriguez and a small group of like-minded Cuban architects and historians who are currently struggling to promote appreciation of Cuba's modern architecture and to protect it from destruction.



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# **SUPERSTUDIO BY ANTONI GAUDI: A UTTERLY URBAN DESIGN GROUP FEATURED IN THE PRATT MANHATTAN GALLERY EXHIBITION**

*Superstudio: Life Without Offices*

November 20, 2003-January 11, 2004

Press Preview: Wednesday, November 20, 1-3 PM

Opening reception: Thursday, November 20, 6-8 PM

(closed November 27-28, December 22-January 12)

Pratt Manhattan Gallery

22 West 40 Street, 2nd Floor

Tuesday-Friday 10 AM-5 PM, Sat 11 AM-5 PM

Sunday 12 PM-3 PM

New York, New York (October 20, 2003)—Pratt Manhattan Gallery, Artium Space, and Storefront for Art and Architecture present *Superstudio: Life Without Offices*, an exhibition of the work of Superstudio, the avant-garde urban design group that dominated radical thinking in design and architecture during the late 1950s and 1970s.

Located in collaboration with members of Superstudio, the exhibition will revisit Superstudio's films and model-buildings—ranging from early pencil sketches, and laminated drawings to group's sketches and designs—examining influence on current policy in urbanity and design.

Initiated in 1960 by a group of radical architects, professors Antonio Gaudin, Franco Albini, Emilio Ambasz, Alessandro Mendini, Mario Botta and Ettore Sottsass, Superstudio's manifesto called for a revolution in creating alternative models of life forms. The members of Superstudio were concerned by a society that seemed to have lost its way, and they sought to create a new world. The group's work was a response to the social and environmental crisis of the 1970s.



## PRESS INFORMATION

### Biography

1955

Superior Industries, a subsidiary of American International Corporation, Toledo, OH, produces a line of heavy-duty equipment for use in the oil and gas industry and other heavy-duty applications. The company is a member of the International Association of Petroleum Equipment Manufacturers.

1961

The company is a member of the International Association of Petroleum Equipment Manufacturers.

1969

The company is a member of the International Association of Petroleum Equipment Manufacturers. This marks the status of the company as a member of the International Association of Petroleum Equipment Manufacturers.

1970

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1977

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1978

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1979

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L I F E

W I T H O U T

O B J E C T S



01/03/03 – 08/06/03

After the social and political unrest that swept through the industrialised world during the mid and late 1960s, artists, designers and architects were confronted by the need to find new ways of working which would be more responsive to the needs of the time.

In Italy, more than in any other European country, economic recovery from the devastation of World War II had been led by the development of successful partnerships between design and industry. However, as consumer culture grew rampant in the late 1950s and early 1960s, many students of design and architecture were becoming uneasy. The ideals of the pre-war Modern Movement, which still dominated university teaching, seemed increasingly irrelevant. During 1964 the University of Florence found itself at the centre of a nationwide student rebellion against the administrations of architecture schools.

The future members of the group Superstudio – Piero Frassinelli, Alessandro Magris, Roberto Magris, Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia – were among the students who had grown frustrated with the assumption that they should continually readdress "...the thousand variations on the theme of the four-legged chair, aerodynamic shapes and the sterilisation of dreams". They were determined to rethink the roles played by design and architecture in contemporary society:

"In those years it became very clear that to continue to design furniture, objects and similar household decorations was no solution to problems of living ... and even less could it serve to save one's own soul."

(Superstudio, 1970)

Superstudio was founded in 1966 and began designing buildings and objects for production. However, as the group's philosophy became more clearly defined, it detached itself increasingly from conventional design activity and concentrated instead on exhibitions, magazines, books and films. Their provocative images were designed to be both utopian and anti-utopian, speculating on the inherent dangers

and apparently limitless possibilities of architecture. Through a continuous process of reduction, Superstudio eventually arrived at the proposition of a world without architecture or designers and a Life Without Objects.

1966-1968

SUPERarchitecture: To the Rescue!

In 1966 two architecture graduates from the University of Florence, Adolfo Natalini and Andrea Branzi, joined forces to stage Superarchitecture, an exhibition in nearby Pistoia. The exhibition marked the beginning of a sustained period of radical activity which was to place the city of Florence at the centre of experimental design and architecture in Italy.

As his own studio was flooded, Natalini was forced to prepare for the exhibition in a studio shared with his friend Cristiano Toraldo di Francia. Together they founded Superstudio, choosing a name which was a logical extension of the theme and title of the Pistoia exhibition. Andrea Branzi founded his own group, Archizoom, which was also to become highly influential.

Superstudio opened an architecture and design office to translate their theoretical and ideological research into practical projects and objects. Three main themes were identified for critical investigation: architecture and monument, architecture and image and Technomorphic Architecture – an exploration of the relationship between nature and technology. Roberto Magris joined the office in 1967, and Piero Frassinelli in 1968.

1969-1971

SUPERprojects: Objects/Monuments/Cities

By early 1969 Superstudio had established a visionary graphic style to suit the boldness of its visions. Assessing the influence of an increasingly novelty-driven consumer society on design and architecture, the group produced an extraordinary series of conceptual projects. Characterised by the innovative use of multimedia techniques, collage, storyboards and literary narratives, its work began to find a wide international audience, reached through exhibitions, books and magazines.

In 1970, Alessandro Poli and Alessandro Magris joined the group. Superstudio's images sought to extract from architecture all that hindered man's ability to live a free life. For the Histograms series and the project Continuous Monument, Superstudio developed its signature black and white surface grid. Seeming to take on a life of its own it spread endlessly across furniture, buildings and entire landscapes, creating a design to end all designs and a monument to end all monuments.

"In a sense our work has used the instruments of architecture in a contrary fashion, gradually, through absurdity, showing its uselessness, its falsity and its immorality."

(Adolfo Natalini, March 1971)

1972-1973

SUPERexistence: Life and Death

In 1972 Superstudio was invited to participate in the exhibition Italy: The New Domestic Landscape, Achievements and Problems in Italian Design at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. By now the group had abandoned the idea of architecture as a prop for human existence. Instead, its members chose to engage in the great themes of human life, promoting an architecture based on Five Fundamental Acts: Life, Education, Ceremony, Love and Death.

"Architecture never touches the great themes, the fundamental themes of our lives. Architecture remains at the edge of our life, and intervenes only at a certain point in the process – usually when behaviour has already been codified."

(Superstudio, 1973)

A film was conceived for each of the five Acts and outlined in the form of storyboards which were published in the Italian magazine Casabella. Only two of the films were realised, Life: Supersurface for the Museum of Modern Art exhibition and Ceremony, for the XV Milan Triennale. The Five Fundamental Acts present Superstudio's thesis on the metamorphosis of architecture into life itself.

1974-1978

SUPERsimple: Elementary Architecture

The projects produced by Superstudio in its later years are the least familiar examples of their work, yet they represent an ingenious attempt to escape from the philosophical bind that the group had created for itself. Through the ironic reduction of design and architecture to a single hypothetical act and to the simplest of equations (architecture = life), Superstudio had effectively eliminated, one by one, all alternative possible courses of action.

During this period many members of the group began to work independently. Natalini, assisted by Toraldo di Francia, Frassinelli and Poli, led a research course in Extra-Urban Material Culture at the University of Florence. The students visited remote regions of Italy to study and document the rapidly disappearing economy and culture of the rural small-holding. This research provided the groundwork for Project Zeno, shown at the Venice Biennale in 1978.

Individual members of the group became increasingly involved in their own activities and Superstudio was finally disbanded in 1986.

Curators: Peter Lang and Bill Menking with James Peto of the Design Museum

Graphic Design: Alex Rich and Jon Hares

The Design Museum is grateful to the members of Superstudio for their advice, co-operation and assistance: Piero Frassinelli, Alessandro Magris, Roberto Magris, Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia.

Particular thanks are due to Piero Frassinelli and Adolfo Natalini.

We would also like to thank all those who have generously lent to the exhibition: Alessandro Bertini, Abet Laminati, Anna Querci, Superstudio Archive and the individual members of Superstudio.

This exhibition is supported by the Italian Cultural Institute and has been organised with the collaboration of Pratt Institute, New York.